

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Canceled).
2. (Currently amended): An isolatedA polypeptide consisting of the amino acid sequence ~~represented by~~ of SEQ ID NO:2.
- 3.-7. (Canceled).
8. (Currently amended): A method for screening a substance capable of inhibiting activity of a polypeptide, comprising:
 - (1) a step of allowing a substance to be tested to contact with a cell expressing ~~the a~~ polypeptide ~~according to claim 2~~ consisting of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 or a polypeptide which comprises an amino acid sequence having 95% or more of homology with the amino acid sequence ~~represented by~~ of SEQ ID NO:2 and which is expressed specifically in rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients,
 - (2) a step of analyzing whether or not activity of the polypeptide to produce a reactive oxygen species (ROS), to accelerate expression of TNF- α , and/or to accelerate expression of COX-2, is inhibited, and

(3) a step of selecting a substance capable of inhibiting activity of the polypeptide.

9.- 10. (Canceled).

11. (New): The method according to claim 8, wherein in step (1), the substance to be tested is contacted with a cell expressing the polypeptide consisting of SEQ ID NO:2.

12. (New): A method for screening a substance capable of inhibiting activity of a polypeptide, comprising:

(1) a step of allowing a substance to be tested to contact with a cell expressing a polypeptide consisting of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 or a polypeptide which comprises an amino acid sequence having 95% or more homology with the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 and which is expressed specifically in rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients,

(2) a step of analyzing whether or not activity of the polypeptide to produce reactive oxygen species (ROS), to accelerate expression of TNF- α , and/or to accelerate expression of COX-2, is inhibited,

(3) a step of selecting a substance capable of inhibiting activity of the polypeptide, and

(4) judging whether or not the substance is useful for treating rheumatoid arthritis and/or osteoarthritis.

13. (New): The method according to claim 8, wherein in step (1), the substance to be tested is contacted with a cell expressing the polypeptide consisting of SEQ ID NO:2.